2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

146 No biological or medical research has hitherto been carried out among
164 the Tallensi or their nearest neighbours. Hence it is impossible to determine how far their physique, efficiency, and standard of health have been affected by their low scale of nutrition. To the lay observer they do not appear to be stunted or to show a high incidence of physical defects. They are fortunate in living outside the sleeping-sickness zone, but the common endemic diseases of the region are rife among them. The
[657] natives have no reliable remedies for these diseases, and the Government dispensary at Zuarungu, the only regular medical service provided for the district, cannot cope with more than a fraction of the sick. From the point of view of physical health the Tallensi of to-day are probably little better off than their fathers were.

291 Native habits of dress and personal hygiene are doubtful assets from
515 the point of view of health. Children go stark naked till adolescence, in the case of boys, and till their first pregnancy in the case of girls. Women go naked except for the perineal band. Men always wear a loin-cloth for the sake of modesty, but it is usually grimy with accumulated dirt. In addition, a man usually wears a goatskin or sheepskin, or a ragged remnant of an old tunic or cloth slung across his back, as his working garb; clothes are worn only on special occasions.

515 Whether or not these customs of dress are injurious, the indifference of the Tallensi to bodily cleanliness cannot be beneficial to their health. By European or Coast African standards, the Tallensi and their neighbours are dirty people. They wash only rarely, especially in the dry season. This is due, in part, to the scarcity of water and to the fact that soap is still an expensive luxury, but also in some measure to native ideas of cleanliness. Tallensi do not object to body dirt. Only young dandies and marriageable girls take pride in a 'clean skin' as a mark of beauty and wash regularly. It is not surprising, therefore, that the most superficial wounds usually fester.

364 The sanitary habits of the natives are equally primitive. A homestead is usually kept fairly clean indoors, but the live-stock yard is inside the homestead, and the accumulation of manure there, as well as the refuse midden just outside the entrance, are the breeding-places of swarms of
[514] flies. Then, also, the natives defecate just outside their homesteads. The stench around a Tale homestead in the rainy season is enough to shake
[240] the hardiest anthropologist. These noisome accompaniments of home-life do not trouble the natives, who look upon animal manure and human excrement as essential fertilizers for their farms.

181 In spite of these hardships and hazards Tallensi set a very high value
183 on their culture and way of life. In his workaday life the native gives an impression of being a steady, sober person with a good grip of himself. He can work hard if necessary, but he can enjoy idleness too. Wasteful and extravagant at times, especially on certain ceremonial occasions, he is normally frugal and abstemious. A keen sense of property and of the value of material goods goes with generosity to kinsfolk and friends. Though he is no stickler for the letter of custom, he attaches great importance to social rights and obligations. Respect for social and genealogical superiors is a strong point of Tale etiquette, but natives are rarely

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

obsequious among themselves. With all their respect for custom they are not its slaves. Individual initiative, ambition and independence of action, within the limits imposed by their social and material order, are common. 181 183

Tallensi do not question their traditional ritual values, but there is an element of what we should call rationalism in their religious attitudes. Their ancestor cult, an elaborate body of beliefs, rites, and ceremonies, is minutely woven into their everyday existence, but it does not pursue them with phantom terrors. On the contrary, it is the principal means provided by Tale culture for keeping the individual and the group on an even keel.

Stability; tolerance of physical hardship and discomfort as well as of human frailty and idiosyncrasy; a reasonable degree of conformity; a tenacious attachment to life fortified by an elaborate ancestor cult—these characteristics of Tale culture strike the observer at the outset. On the surface the Tale ideal is to have enough to eat, to be a successful parent, and to live at peace with one's fellows. Closer acquaintance, however, reveals hidden undercurrents. Beneath the overt stability and integration of the social order lie continuous tensions. Indeed the stability of Tale society can only be understood as a product of these tensions, created and maintained by the social processes that resolve them. Again, the natives' keen sense of the importance of social obligations hides a tendency to aggressive self-assertion. Tallensi are quick to anger if they feel themselves wronged, and are good haters. Their usual spirit of good-natured tolerance masks a proneness to suspicious watchfulness, and their frugality covers a spendthrift streak. These contradictions are subtly revealed in their religious practices. The strength of their ancestor cult rests not only on its predominant role as an integrating force in their social structure, but also on its profound psychological value for the individual. Tallensi react to misfortune with strong anxiety and guilt feelings from which they find a refuge in their ancestor cult.

This sketch of how the Tallensi strike a European calls for qualifications. It is couched in terms of our cultural values in order to help us to visualize these people in terms of a familiar vocabulary and automatic mental images. Objectively, from the standpoint of the people themselves, the value judgements implicit in our description lose their meaning. What we see as their poverty, dirtiness, poor health, and rudeness of culture they accept with equanimity as the normal conditions of their life. They have no grievance or shame about them. Being common to everybody, these conditions do not create rifts in their society or maladjustments in the individual as they do with us. They are in one respect simply part of the atmosphere within which the culture of the Tallensi (and their neighbours) develops its own richness and amplitude; in another, the material of significant themes in that culture.

Every aspect of Tale social life is conditioned by the fact that they are a primitive peasantry. There is no division of labour apart from that of the sexes. Censuses taken in various parts of the country show that not less than 95 per cent. of the adult males are wholly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, and all of the odd 5 per cent. are partially dependent on the same source. Craft specialists work at their crafts only 181 241 463

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

618 621 Kpɔlɔg (Pwɔlɔg), Sipaat has no ties of clanship with either of these places. Yinduuri, a clan whose inner constitution is a miniature replica of the whole system of interlacing clanship ties which we have been describing, is contiguous with Zandoya but has no ties of clanship with it. Zandoya's clanship ties link it with Gorogo, which in turn is linked with a group of Gɔrisi, who live in the Bɔlɔga district.

This is but one series of concatenated clan linkages running from end to end of the Tongo district and even, like those of the Namoos, extending across to the Gɔrisi. Similar chains of clanship ties link the other Talis clans to one another and to this series; and the whole forms an elaborately reticulated system which stretches beyond the linguistic and cultural frontiers of Taleland. By these chains of clanship ties the Talis are linked on to peoples outside Taleland who live quite beyond the boundaries of their regular interests and concerns.

618 We have been discussing clanship in the narrow sense—that is, ties implying the prohibition of marriage, joint leviratic rites, the reciprocal privileges and duties of *sunzɔp*, and such things as the liability in former times to be raided for one another's debts. As a rule, every constituent maximal lineage of every clan has such ties with one or more territorially contiguous lineages of neighbouring clans. Most of them also have clanship ties with some lineages of clans not adjacent to them, but not very far away, reckoning the distance in terms of the number of unrelated clans intervening and not by geographical criteria. There is no fixed rule; but within this cluster of settlements it is always a safe prediction that the greater the distance separating two clans the less likely are they to be linked by clanship.

618 608 In addition, every clan recognizes one or more clans in its vicinity as *sunzɔp*-by-courtesy. Soog and Wakii; Gundaat, Kpata'ar, and Bunkiuk; Yinduur and Zandoya; Sii and Gorogo: these consider one another to be *sunzɔp*-by-courtesy, and they generally appear at one another's funerals in this capacity.

618 [183] As with Zubiuŋ and the clans adjacent to it, so among the Hill Talis, the ties which make up the field of clanship of any maximal lineage are not all of equal strength. The critical norms have an absolute value. Clanship prohibits intermarriage, vests defined rights and obligations in each lineage, and implies a solidarity which is incompatible with hostile acts like war or abducting one another's wives, or raiding one another's cattle. If these norms are infringed, as inevitably happens now and then, they are not thereby invalidated. The infringement tends to provoke processes which cancel out its effects and either re-establish the invulnerability of the norms or bring about a new alinement of structural ties, which neutralizes the breach. At the same time spatial distribution has a selective influence on the extent and frequency of the intercourse between lineages linked by ties of clanship. Proximity encourages more frequent and regular co-operation in situations which mobilize ties of clanship. Other factors, too, influence the gradation of clanship ties, the most important of these being the fact that solidarity, co-operation, and mutual dependence are greater within the clan than between linked lineages of different clans. Besides having a specific field of clanship, each maximal

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

his quarrel with the chief of his clan. The diviner added that the ancestors demanded that Gbalɔg should be exhumed and re-buried at Tongo among his forefathers. This meant that Gbalɔg's sons should beg the Chief of Tongo's pardon and offer expiatory sacrifices to the clan ancestors. But Gbalɔg's second son, who had lived with him, scornfully refused to do this, and added the further sin of withholding from his older brother Naŋgbeog, the legitimate heir, the property their father had left. There was scathing criticism of his behaviour at Tongo but nothing could be done about it. There are no jural sanctions compelling a man to abide by custom in cases of this kind; and as the Tallensi often say, men do not fear to defy even the ancestor spirits, when their property or power is at stake.

But shortly afterwards the second son suddenly became ill and died. At once everybody drew the obvious moral: he had incurred the wrath of the ancestors for his double sin. And when the cause of his death was sought by divination public opinion was confirmed. Naŋgbeog, now the recognized heir, at once got some elders to plead with the chief on his behalf and the curse was withdrawn. Naŋgbeog gave a young bull and several small stock to be sacrificed to the clan ancestors in expiation of his father's sin. Since representatives of all branches of the clan have to be present at such sacrifices, this was equivalent to a ritual reconciliation. Naŋgbeog then exhumed and re-buried the bodies of his father and brother at Tongo. He brought home the live-stock and personal effects he had inherited from his father as well as the widows and children of whom he was now the proper guardian. Gbalɔg's defection was thus erased and his line wholly reunited to the parent stem.

Lineage solidarity, which in its widest extent passes over into clan solidarity, has great practical utility for the natives. But this is not the source of its strength and binding force. Their roots lie in the moral premisses of Tale society; the ideas of right and duty, in the idiom of Tale culture, are the formative elements in the sentiment and the display of lineage solidarity. The starting-point is the fundamental moral axiom of Tale social organization, the axiom that kinship is binding in its own right.[1] And the supreme sanction of lineage solidarity is, as we have seen, the ancestor cult, which is, for the natives, the objective, cultural embodiment of the social conscience.

This is evident not only from the preceding analysis but from a consideration of the rights and restrictions associated with lineage membership. There is the whole complex of rights, obligations, and prohibitions centred in the wives of the lineage members. Underlying it is the identification of lineage members with one another in virtue of their common agnatic descent. The right to inherit a clansman's wife is the correlative of the prohibition against adultery with a clansman's wife. Both rules spring from the notion of the social equivalence of siblings and from the common interest of the clan in the children of the clan. These are not matters of collective property rights but of moral norms. This is clear from the sanction against adultery with a clansman's wife, the belief that the adulterer is mystically dangerous to the injured husband if the latter gets ill.

[1] This subject is fully discussed in *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi.*

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

affairs, their absence does not disturb jural or ritual relations centred in the family. It is like a tree which remains a tree morphologically and physiologically even if some of its minor branches have been lopped off.

The foregoing is true of the great majority of Tale families. The structure of the normal family can still be accurately described without reference to contact influence, in spite of the fact that a few families can be found in every settlement which have been badly mutilated by the prolonged absence abroad of their male members. Admittedly the norms of family relations have not remained completely insulated from these influences. With the ease of modern communications and the openings for work abroad, young people have incentives and opportunities which their fathers never had for resisting the authority of their elders and for breaking away from the family for a longer or shorter time. But as yet these new incentives and opportunities appear only as modifying factors in the play of the culturally defined family relations. They do not represent a conflicting set of norms, creating divisions within Tale society. For instance, a young man who is still jurally a minor cannot at will leave the domestic family to which he belongs by birth and set up an independent household. He can do so only in compliance with the moral rules and social conventions that regulate the fission of families. In fact, the motive to break away will only arise when certain standard changes take place in the composition of the domestic unit to which he belongs, or when he reaches a stage of social maturity which precipitates certain standard tensions between him and the head of the unit. The alternative for a young man who, in these days, hankers after independence is to leave the community until such time as he is prepared to settle down. He has to seek work abroad, in Ashanti or the Colony, or in the service of the white man nearer home. He is assured of a cordial welcome home whenever he decides to return, whether it be for a few weeks only or permanently. But if he makes up his mind to settle down at home it can only be within the existing social framework, and this means complying with the norms of family organization. There is no other way by which he can get married or acquire a house site or farm-land in his natal settlement, let alone play his part in community affairs. Hitherto these norms have been so well maintained that no returned emigrant has been known to flout them.

Summing up, we see that the Tale domestic system has three morphological strata. It consists of a segmentary economic formation—households of different dimensions and degrees of economic self-sufficiency—embraced within a segmentary jural and ceremonial formation—domestic units not necessarily congruent with households grouped under family heads—and this again contained within a system of residential grouping in which the changes of phase in domestic structure are crystallized.

in places like Kumasi, I can say with certainty that the great majority are under 30.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

CHAPTER VII

THE GENETIC DEVELOPMENT OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

TO complete our analysis of the norms governing the relations of parents and children we must now glance at their development in the course of the child's life. Different themes are dominant at successive periods of the child's physical and social maturation. At first the dominant theme is the love and devotion of the parents; then their authority and responsibility come to the forefront; later the principle of reciprocity emerges as a leading idea; and lastly we see the differentiation and hidden opposition between successive generations on the surface.

Babyhood[1]

Tale babies (*bilie*, pl. *bilies*) are the darlings of the family. Totally naked except for the amulets of their spirit guardians around the neck, they are seldom quite clean. But then, bodily cleanliness is the least of the virtues amongst the Tallensi. Though I have seen babies at the sitting stage (about a year old) left alone in a shady spot for an hour or so, it is more usual for them to be in someone's care at all times of the day. Looking after baby is everybody's job—grandparents, older brothers and sisters (boys are as tender as girls with a baby), mother's co-wives, father, and, most important of all, mother.

Up to the time that it is weaned, which occurs towards the end of its third year, a baby (*bilie*) is mainly in its mother's care. For at least the first year it is wholly dependent on the breast for nourishment. It is given the breast whenever it cries or frets or the mother feels inclined to nurse it. Whenever the mother sits down to rest or has

[1] Tallensi distinguish different stages of infancy according to the feeding-habits and level of physical skill reached by the infant. They never count months or years, but a parent is often able to state roughly how many months or years have elapsed since the birth of the child, working it out, most commonly, by reference to harvest and sowing times or to the Great Festivals. A babe in arms is *bilie*; until it is weaned it is described as 'still suckling (*u na mɔɣarme*)'. If it is said to be still suckling but 'eating a little porridge (*u diit saɣabo biel-biel*)' one can infer that it is at least 2. The unweaned infant's stage of development is further specified by stating whether it is crawling (*u bɔɣarme*) or walking (*u kyɛnme*) or already talking (*u vələnrəme*). When the child is weaned it is said to 'have left off milk (*u tuk biihim*)'. Lastly comes the stage, at between 3 and 4 years, when it is said to be old enough to have another immediately following sibling (*u saɣa nyeer marəga*)—an idea we shall explain in a later chapter. The subject-matter of this chapter is supplemented by my paper, *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland*, cit. supra.

[p. 187]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

members of his inner lineage, at what he called the deliberate flouting of his rights as *biiraan*, owner of the child. A long squabble between the two lineages followed which eventually petered out in a compromise. This may seem a storm in a teacup; it was taken very seriously by a dozen Tale elders.

The outstanding example of the retention of patrilineal rights is found in the case of a girl who grows up at her *ahəb yiri*. Whatever her personal relations with her father's lineage may be, it is they who receive the placation gifts and the bride-price when she marries. The *ahəb*'s share is only the 'cow of rearing'.

Cases of girls living as foster children at their *ahəb yiri* up to marriageable age are uncommon. I knew of only one girl who was living with her *ahəb* and would probably not be taken back by her father's people before she reached marriageable age. A girl living with her mother's brother is usually there because she was sent to her maternal grandmother in early childhood owing to the death of her mother. She may be left there until she is 11 or 12, but she is then generally fetched by her father's people. A boy has more freedom. He cannot be forced to return to his paternal home if he does not wish to do so.

An interesting reflection of the conventional ideas on the relations of an *ahəb* and his foster *ahəŋ* is found in the story commonly told of how certain politico-ritual offices came to be transferred from one clan to another. The tale is so stereotyped that it can be regarded as a standard myth. It is alleged of several of the lesser chiefships that they were originally vested in different clans from those that now hold them—usually clans that are closely related to the present holders by local or ritual ties. The last chief of the original line, the myth relates, had his sister's son, a member of the clan now holding the chiefship, living with him. The chief put great trust in his *ahəŋ*; and, either because he had no sons or because his sons were indifferent to politico-ritual affairs, the chief always delegated his *ahəŋ* to represent him. Thus, he used to send the *ahəŋ* as his messenger whenever he had to communicate with the senior chief who was the elector to that chiefship. In this way the *ahəŋ* became known to the elector. When his *ahəb* died he hastened stealthily to the elector with the news, taking lavish gifts along with him. Knowing him so well from their previous contacts and persuaded by the rich gifts he brought, the elector thereupon immediately conferred the chiefship on him. Thus the chiefship came into the possession of its present holders. A similar story is told to explain the dominant position of the lineage of Lakum yiri in the politico-ritual structure of Ba'ari, in spite of their being an attached lineage.[1]

When it is pointed out that such actions are contrary to custom and would not be allowed at present, the natives have two answers. Firstly, they say, unscrupulous people never hesitate to break a customary rule

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 88.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

if it suits their purpose. Men have always been prepared to go to great lengths to win an office so coveted as that of a chief or tendaana. In addition, they argue, the breach of custom is not so outrageous as it seems. For the *ahəŋ* can claim that if his mother had been born a man he would have had an unquestionable right to the office.

This argument gains strength from the fact that in certain cases an *ahəŋ* or a sororal lineage is delegated to exercise rights vested in a particular office or lineage. Thus the people of Tongo maintain that in former times the Chief of Tongo always had the right to 'strip (*yɛa*)' all locust-bean trees in Tongo and the adjacent settlements, including Tenzugu. Now it would have been neither tactful nor dignified for the chief to send his wives or clansmen to strip locust-bean trees growing in another settlement. Therefore every chief delegated one of his 'sister's sons' in each settlement to harvest the pods for him. The *ahəŋ* was entitled to keep some of the locust-bean pods he harvested, but had to send the bulk to the Chief of Tongo. Tongo people say that the 'sisters' sons' gradually ceased sending the chief's share to him and took full possession of the trees, in much the same way as a man obtains *de facto* possession of land loaned to one of his ancestors by a matrilateral kinsman.

Certain powers normally held by tendaanas only are sometimes vested in lineages that do not have tendaanas. Thus at Tongo the people of Seug live on land that comes under the ritual jurisdiction of the Zoo Yiraaŋ.[1] But when they dig a new grave they do not send for the Yiraaŋ to come and 'mark out the grave (*kyɛbəg voor*)' ritually, as they should do, according to the letter of custom. The head of one segment of Seug performs the rite instead. He keeps the carcass of the goat sacrificed, but sends the head and skin to the Zoo Yiraaŋ. This arrangement is found wherever people of one clan live on land that falls under the ritual jurisdiction of another clan. The regular explanation is that an ancestor of the lineage head who actually marks out the grave was an *ahəŋ* of the tendaana who had ritual jurisdiction over the land when the lineage first settled there, and that the tendaana delegated this ritual duty to him and his successors.

The Ahəŋ as Intermediary

By his genealogical position an *ahəŋ* forms a link between his father's lineage and his mother's lineage; and by extension this applies to every degree of matrilateral kinship. Hence an *ahəŋ* is always chosen as intermediary in all private jural and ritual transactions between a segment of one clan and a segment of another. Marriage is the most important of these transactions. A key role in all the jural and ritual formalities necessary for the conclusion of a marriage is that of the

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 169.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

828 situation everybody takes it for granted that any person participating either already knows, or wants to know, how to behave in a manner appropriate to the situation and in accordance with his level of maturity. An effort to learn is thus evoked as an adaptation to the demands of a real situation. It is not that people expect one another [183 876] to act with automatic and machine-like precision; for in point of fact Tale culture tolerates considerable elasticity in the patterns of behaviour. We have an analogy in our own culture in the expectation entertained by most adults that little girls want to play with dolls and little boys with toy engines. We act on this expectation whenever we buy presents for children. How exactly this influences the play of Western children has not been investigated, but there can be little doubt that it does. We expect children to know how to play without being taught.

863 In contrast to this, many Western mothers nowadays do not expect their children to acquire clean habits simply in the normal course of development, and therefore set out to train them deliberately from earliest infancy in these habits. Tale mothers never train their children deliberately to be clean. When they reach the stage of walking and talking easily, children are expected not to defecate indoors in the daytime but to be asked to be taken outside or to run out themselves. A lapse meets with an expression of disapproval and a reprimand: 'You are big enough already. Can't you go outside to defecate?' 868 The child learns in response to the expectation that it is capable of 198 normal behaviour in that respect.[1] Similarly, infants are expected to

[1] The example is intended to illustrate how the expectation of normal behaviour acts but, of course, other factors are also involved in the Tale child's acquisition of clean habits. These habits are learnt gradually, not all at once. Before it can walk or talk, its mother or an older child sometimes takes it outside when it shows signs of wishing to defecate. By the time it is expected to be clean it is being drawn into the play-activities of slightly older children, most of which take place out of doors. The need to adapt itself to the habits and standards of its older playmates is a strong stimulus to the child to learn not only bowel and bladder control but also the rules [576 514] of etiquette. As the Tallensi have no special sanitary arrangements, but excrete in the open anywhere near the homestead, taking care only to keep a little way from the paths and from any people who may be about, it is easy for a child to learn the adult convention from the example of older children and adults. Clean habits, like other skills, are learnt as organic responses (see below, p. 10). I shall refer to this matter again, in another context, in a later section.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

used always to milk the cow during the day, in the pasture, when he became hungry; but if he was not going to be allowed to do this because the white man must be supplied with milk, he would no longer drive the cow out to graze.

Increasing skill and maturity, therefore, bring increasing responsibilities but also concomitant rewards—that is, ever closer integration into the system of co-operation and reciprocity which is the basis of Tale domestic economy.[1] The unity of the social sphere, the interest of children in the world of adult activities, and the rapidity with which each advance in educational achievement is socially utilized constitute a ring of incentives which help to explain the eagerness of Tale children to grow up and take their full place in adult life.

Observances. Finally, there are the observances which every Talənə has to learn in the course of his or her life. These comprise ritual, moral and ethical values, norms and obligations, as well as rules of etiquette and standards of correct conduct in general. Some of these types of observances can be readily identified in Tale culture. It is not so easy to determine what exactly are moral and ethical norms and obligations and their place in this culture. Certainly an exhaustive study of this, the most recondite and perhaps fundamental aspect of Tale education, could not be ventured without first precisely establishing the nature of these observances and how they are maintained. For the limited purpose of this paper it will be sufficient to select some representative examples of rules of conduct the violation or neglect of which is repugnant to the cultural idiom of the Tallensi or, otherwise expressed, would be considered blameworthy or disgraceful, sinful or wicked, uncouth or embarrassing to others. To ask how they are learnt is to ask how they are experienced by the growing child at different stages of its development.

To the native these norms have an arbitrary quality as if they require no validation, other than the fact that normal and equable social relations would be impossible without them, that they are indispensable for satisfactory social adjustment.[2] In Taleland, it is true, learn-

[1] See M. and S. L. Fortes, 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', loc. cit., for a more detailed description of this.

[2] The argument of this section owes much to the stimulus of Durkheim's *L'Éducation morale*.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

183 867 ing the correct observances has many points in common with learning skills, but there is a significant difference. When a child is learning a skill he has the test of objective achievement to evaluate his progress and to stimulate him to further effort; when he is learning how to behave properly the only test of attainment is the reaction of other people and his own sense of the adequacy or inadequacy of his conduct. [626] One can observe, in consequence, that both children and adults are very sensitive to ridicule of a lapse in manners or morals but are fairly indifferent to ridicule of poor skill. The contrast between observances and skills is evident when we compare the way in which a child learns to model clay figures, gradually perfecting his technique, with the 'all or none' way, associated sometimes with corporal punishment, in which he is taught to respect other people's property, or the way he is taught his totemic taboos.

867 Among the Tallensi, as in many other primitive societies, manners and morals are acquired almost as a by-product of the normal social relations between the growing child and the people who constitute his or her social space. The unity of the social sphere and the expectation of normal behaviour have a correspondingly greater influence than in the acquisition of skills and interests. But the critical factor is the tension inherent in the fundamental educational relationships, the authority of parent over child and of senior over junior.

861 593 In Tale ideology this is epitomized in the danger attributed to a parent's resentment. If any one who has reached years of discretion behaves in such a way as to incur the resentment and hostility of a parent, some calamity will certainly befall him or her unless he comes formally to beg forgiveness and the injured parent ritually abjures his or her anger.[1] It very often happens that two children of about the same age and members of a single joint family are related as parent and child. They can be seen playing together amicably, squabbling at times, and working together. But when the 'child' is questioned about his playmate, he will say: *nzorumi, on ndyam la zugu*, 'I fear (respect) him, because he begot me.' This is not merely a formula. Sinkawol (aged 23–5) used to order his 'father', Kyekambe (aged

[1] The connexion between one particular aspect of Tale morality, their notion of incest, and the background of kinship has been discussed in my paper on 'Kinship, Incest and Exogamy', loc. cit.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

867 857 somnolent, sat whimpering as he ate, while some one else commented that if you want your share of food you must be there to receive it.

● 183 764 The principle of reciprocity which is thus early learnt in association with siblings and age mates is one of the basic moral axioms of Tale social life. If a man refuses to come to the assistance of a neighbour who has invited a collective hoeing party, the latter will retaliate by refusing assistance to the former at a later date. Often at mortuary ceremonies some one, not obliged by custom to do so, will bring an animal to be slaughtered for the dead, 'because when my father died, he brought a sheep to be killed'. A girl of about 10, after her grandmother's funeral, showed me how half her head had been shaved *in* the customary way. But her spontaneous explanation was: 'Because, at the feast, when they cook the beans they give me a whole dish to myself.' This moral aspect of Tale social relations, as we can now see, explains the rights which increasing economic skill confer upon a boy or a girl. Those who work for you *deserve* their keep.[1]

[854 855] [1] I have not attempted to track the Tale attitudes towards authority and justice to their roots in infant psychology, as would be necessary for an exhaustive analysis. Some of the phenomena which should be observed in this connexion are not accessible to study by the behaviouristic methods of the field worker. But it may be worth mentioning that one can readily observe the constraint and force which, at some times, the affection and indulgence which, at others, are expressed in the way parents treat their infant children. From the day of its birth an infant is subjected to the agonizing ordeal of a daily bath in steaming medicated water which is so hot that it becomes rigid with pain on the first douche. One sees infants of a few days to about 12 months old arbitrarily held down on their mother's laps while medicated drinking water is forcibly poured down their throats as they struggle and splutter. A few minutes after an infant has been treated thus roughly [866] it will be lovingly suckled, fondled, and caressed by mother or sister, or affectionately dandled by its father. A 3-year-old suddenly frightened runs to its father, or more characteristically to its mother to bury its face between her knees, clutching her thighs, or to snatch at the breast. The same 3-year-old, in a fit of temper, will nag, whimper petulantly, strike its mother with its little fists. No one beats an infant for this. The mother tries to soothe it, or patiently calls some one—husband or co-wife—to come and take charge of the unruly child. This indulgence extends [839] to the excretory processes, and to masturbation, which is overt until puberty in boys. Until it is weaned, at about 3—when it can walk—it has very complete possession of its mother. After weaning, which is generally mild, the child becomes more detached from its mother, who now resumes regular intercourse with her husband. At this age, or even younger, children are often playfully threatened by their fathers. 'I will slaughter you if you do so and so', but they always seem to react with complete equanimity to this. Yet a boy of 4–5 years, suspiciously

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

Like ourselves, the Tallensi recognize that some observances are merely matters of convention, others are matters of conscience, and a great many have elements of both. Their emphasis, however, differs conspicuously from ours. For example, the notion of cruelty to animals as delinquent or reprehensible would never occur to them. Small boys often catch mice or birds and keep them, tied with a strip of strong grass, to play with for days and eventually kill and eat them. It is, indeed, a crude form of nature study, for they learn a great deal about the habits, the anatomy, and physiology of the animals and birds they ostensibly maltreat in this way. They are never checked, and the suggestion that this was bad (*the Tallensi have no expression*, as far as I am aware, for our notion of cruelty) was received with amused laughter. It is a natural interest of children and not a moral problem; and it does not produce a general attitude of cruelty to animals. Both children and adults often show great affection for domestic dogs, for example.

Many rules of conduct are observed 'because it is befitting' (*de naʀəmi*)—or because non-conformity is 'unbecoming' (*de pu naʀəmi*)—i.e. it rouses embarrassment or ridicule or public criticism. Thus when greeting a superior, a man must sit with legs flat, crossed at the calves, bare-headed, eyes lowered, whereas a woman must crouch on all fours or sit with thighs close together and legs tucked under the buttocks. This latter posture in women is a matter of modesty. Up to about 9 or 10 years of age a little girl can sit in any way, legs spread out if she wishes, although from babyhood she has learnt to sit with legs tucked under. As she approaches puberty she will often be admonished 'sit properly' if she does not sit decorously. It is unbecoming for women to eat the domestic fowl, and I have often heard little girls of 9 or 10 boast that they are already refraining from it. A woman goes naked until she is advanced in her first pregnancy.

eyeing me from the security of his mother's lap, was heard to say that he was afraid I might cut off his penis. The Tale infant, in short, appears to be permitted to gratify all its wish impulses without restraint; yet it must do so in a social world over which it has no control, in which it is a weak dependant. Here, I think, still speaking in terms of superficial psychology, is the germ of the later domination of respect for authority in the child's moral development. It seems probable, from these observations, that the deeper psychology of the process is not unlike that which has been recorded by students of our own children, such as Dr. S. Isaacs.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

183 After that she must wear a perineal band even at night, in the privacy
291 of her own room, for the sake of modesty. Not to do so, *de mara*
834 *valɔm*, ' is embarrassing ' for her and others. Similarly it is indecorous for a young man, especially if he is married, to go about without a loin cloth. His comrades would scoff at him, womenfolk jeer, and his wife be ashamed. Yet the Tallensi have not the slightest sense of shame about the naked body or any physiological functions, all of which they discuss publicly and openly. Ask any one, child or adult, the sex of an infant and the answer will be to open its legs and expose the genitals with the word ' boy ' or ' girl '. An infant's excretory processes arouse no embarrassment and meet with no attempts at
[863] regulation. As we have seen it is expected to learn cleanliness in due course. The child is made to understand that excreting indoors is a nuisance to those who have to keep the house clean. No one would dream of chastising an infant for this misdemeanour. These are all matters of decency and decorum learnt without formal instructions as direct adjustments to the social space, through the influence of the expectation of normal behaviour.

577 It is otherwise with the morality of property. A thief incurs disgrace
685 and universal opprobrium, and even small children of 6 and 7 express
673 contempt for one. A child that steals, like one who neglects a task,
861 can expect a severe beating if his father is a conscientious citizen. ' Don't let Tii (a boy of about 6) come and see your things,' said Batiignwol, a little girl of 7 or 8, to me one day, ' he 's a thief. He stole his mother's ground-nuts and meat and his father beat him and tied him up.' Theft is immoral as well as criminal. Lying, by contrast, is considered merely foolish and contemptible. It causes annoyance and a liar's comrades distrust him, but one would not punish a child for lying unless it led to serious consequences. Such misdemeanours, nevertheless, go beyond what is merely ' unbecoming '. They are not nice, *a-pu maha*.

183 Finally there is a type of observance which is a matter of conscience rather than of public approval or reprobation. Many of these have a ritual character and most of them are associated with mystical notions. There are food taboos which must be observed from infancy; there are ritual obligations such as those connected with mourning, which a person may escape till he reaches adulthood, but

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

which children of 9 or 10 are fully familiar with and the compulsion of which they experience to the same degree as the adults; and there is the whole body of implicit moral norms which regulate the day-to-day life of the family and emerge in the duties of children to one another and to their parents.

I have already mentioned the prohibition in some clans against the eating of fowl by first-born children. By contrast with the voluntary abstention from fowl meat practised by women, this is a taboo of supreme mystical value for these clans and is exactly parallel to the totemic avoidances of other clans. The Hill Tallis, for instance, may not eat tortoise, some may not eat crocodile or python, and others taboo dog. A 5-year-old knows his or her personal or clan taboo, and can state it emphatically. The remedy for a chance infringement of such a taboo is extremely simple—e.g., in the case of the fowl, crushing some fowl droppings in water and giving the child the fluid to drink. Again the supernatural penalty for a breach is of a vague and general kind. In some cases it is thought that it would lead merely to an eruption of scabies on the head; in others it is said that the offender would slowly lose health and strength. These sanctions, however, are not the effective agencies maintaining the observances. Breaches of these rules are exceptional, both among children and among adults. A Talənja submits to a food taboo in virtue of a configuration of positive habits and dispositions built up in childhood, not through fear of the sanctions. From the time that it is a babe in arms a child is prevented from tasting or even touching any food which it is prohibited from eating. Later it will be called away from where its companions are sitting over a fire roasting titbits of food forbidden to it—'Come here, you mustn't eat that; it is forbidden.' I once observed a child of about 5 standing aloof while a group of his brothers and sisters were consuming a dish of python meat—a prized delicacy. 'I don't eat python, it is my taboo,' he explained, with an expression of complete aversion.

A vivid example of how food taboos are inculcated was provided by a biographical reminiscence of the chief of Tongo who, as a first-born, may not eat fowl. There was talk in his court-room of crops and famine in the old days, when an elder wondered if a man would eat a forbidden animal if he were starving. The chief, holding with

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

262 some of his elders that it would be too repugnant even for a starving
869 man to do so, told this story of how he had himself, on two occasions, violated his taboo. When he was a child of perhaps 5 or 6 he was the favourite of his grandfather, as often happens. Some one brought the old man a gift of eggs which he promptly had roasted. He had to go outside to attend to some matter and he left his small grandson to see that no one purloined the eggs. Now an egg is a potential fowl, and is therefore equally taboo with the latter. The chief described how there was a brief struggle between his conscience and his desire, and how he succumbed and ate the eggs. His grandfather was furious when he returned and the child in trepidation lied, accusing a girl who was in the next room. The girl denied the accusation and the small boy's father was called in to adjudicate. He at once suspected his son, but the grandfather angrily defended the boy, who was now too terrified even to speak. The matter was dropped; but the small boy, afraid of his father, remained with his grandfather till nightfall. Then he slunk out, only to be caught at once by his father, who had been waiting for him. His father said nothing, but grimly called for a feather and a large gourd of water. 'Drink,' he commanded, and compelled the child, now sobbing with terror, to swallow the whole gourdful of water. 'Open your mouth,' said the father, and began to tickle the child's throat with the feather until he vomited. 'And now,' said the father, grasping the child's arms tightly and striking him right and left, on buttocks, back and head, 'I'll teach you to eat fowl and steal and tell lies.' 'That was how I learnt not to eat fowl,' the chief concluded amid general laughter. But, he continued, many years later, at the time of the great famine, he with two companions was on his way to a neighbouring district and stopped for the night *en route*. They were extremely hungry, not having had a proper meal for days, and when they were offered porridge and a cooked fowl ate ravenously. Now two of them tabooed the fowl, but they were too hungry to resist. The meal finished, they rose, when suddenly the other man who was not allowed to eat fowl was overcome with nausea and began to vomit. Immediately he himself also began to vomit. They had not, after all, been able to stomach the fowl.

183 How strongly quite young children feel the compulsion of a ritual
764 obligation was brought home to me when a boy of about 10–11 was

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

telling me one day about his dead mother. 'I want them to complete her funeral', he said at length, sadly, 'so that I can have my head shaved' (a ritual obligation). 'Why?' I asked. 'Well, is it not my mother?' he said. 'If I don't have my head shaved it is dirt' (ritual uncleanness).

This is typical also of the moral attitudes to the living, to parents and siblings, engendered in the normal course of family life. That is how children learn to be obedient, considerate of others, ready to co-operate, careful of household property, and so forth.

It is evident from the above examples that adjustment to authority and adjustment to equals act together in the child's acquisition of moral observances. But my observations have led me to conclude that authority is effective from an earlier age than the pressure of opinion from equals. From earliest infancy commands, accompanied by acts or gestures, are constantly being addressed to children. 'Go to your father', 'Take this', 'Come here'—as the child is lifted up, or pulled away from some object it must not touch. Until the age of 3–4, when they are walking and talking well, children appear to be indifferent to the presence of other children or indeed of adults other than their parents and members of their own family. I have watched two infants of 2–2½ years old, both walking, remain for over an hour within a few feet of each other without showing the least interest in each other. By the age of 3½–4 the Tale infant has emerged from this stage of egocentricity (as Piaget has termed it).[1] It will now run to join another child of this age or older, and likes to play with younger infants. It has now also become sensitive to public opinion to a degree not far short of an adult, and therefore capable of adjustment to others, as the following incident illustrates: I was chatting with Ɔmara and a few other adult members of his house when his little daughter Sampana, aged about 3½ years, who knew me as a familiar and friendly visitor, ran out to see me. 'Give me some money,' she asked; and her manner, intonation, and posture were so like those of the grown-up women who often half-playfully asked me for money, that the whole company burst spontaneously into loud laughter. Sampana, obviously taken aback, turned tail and fled indoors where we found her sobbing with chagrin. 'She is ashamed at our laughter,' said Ɔmara, still

[1] J. Piaget, *Language and Thought of the Child.*

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

867 856 861 amused. When the child's mother tried to soothe her she first struggled and struck at her, venting her chagrin on her mother. It was fully ten minutes before her mother was able to quieten her by playing with her and distracting her by making her a toy of wet clay. 'They will laugh at him (or her)' or 'His comrades will laugh at him' is the commonest motive alleged for correct behaviour. If you ask a boy of 6 or 7 why he no longer plays with the little girls he says, 'If I do my comrades will laugh at me'; and little girls say the same. Adolescents, talking about their sweethearts, who are usually clan [626] 'sisters', explain why they avoid the girls of their own section—'because our comrades will find out and laugh at us'; and the adult is equally sensitive to public opinion.

● 183 *The total pattern and its genetic development.* We have seen that these categories of social behaviour are not learnt in isolation one from the other but as patterns in which interests, elements of skill, and observances are combined. The Tale housewife, going several miles into the bush to collect firewood, is using knowledge of the bush tracks and of the best places for firewood acquired over a period of years; but she is impelled also by the sense of duty to her family and her own self-esteem. The Tale farmer's devotion to his agricultural pursuits is due to a passionate interest in land and crops and to a sense of moral responsibility towards his family and his ancestor spirits. His skill is but one of the factors that affect his general efficiency.

183 867 155 These total patterns which constitute the texture of Tale cultural behaviour are not built up bit by bit, by addition, during the course of a child's life. They are present as *schemas*[1] from the beginning. My observations suggest that the course of development is somewhat as follows: at first the child acquires a well-defined interest associated with a postural diagram of the total pattern. The postural diagram is, as it were, a contour map, extremely simplified and crude but comprehending the essential elements and relations of the full pattern. Further experience strengthens and amplifies the interest at the same time as it causes the details of the postural diagram to be filled out, making it more and more adaptable and controllable, producing more

[1] I have taken this concept from Prof. F. C. Bartlett's *Remembering*, pp. 199 ff., though its bald application here hardly does justice to the significance given to it by Prof. Bartlett, and to its value for an understanding of primitive education.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

discriminatory responses to real situations, and linking it up with other patterns of behaviour and with norms of observance. The total pattern is not built up brick by brick, like a house, but evolves from the embryonic form.

A simple demonstration of this principle is provided by a child's learning to dance. A favourite amusement of women with infants just beginning to walk is to let them dance. The tiny tot, barely able to maintain an upright posture for ten minutes or so, is set up on its legs. A couple of women—usually the women of a homestead play with an infant thus when they have no work on hand—calling out to it, with laughter and warmth, 'Come on, dance', begin to sing and clap a dance rhythm and execute a few steps. Tale infants respond with every sign of pleasure to such stimulus and by the age of about 3 have learnt, in a sketchy and diagrammatic but specifically recognizable way, the rhythms and the main steps of the festival dances. The 6-year-old has advanced so far that he or she can sometimes join the real dancing of the adolescents. His sense of rhythm is accurate, he learns the songs quickly, and he has the pattern of the dance clearly. But his dancing is extremely crude still. It tends to be mechanical and monotonous, completely lacking the improvizations and variations, the delicate tracery of step and gesture with which the skilled adult fills out the formal pattern. Every year improves the child's style, but even the adolescent has not yet perfected his or her technique. Yet from babyhood to maturity dancing ability grows continuously.

A child's knowledge of the kinship structure evolves in the same way. The schema, rudimentary and unstable as yet, can be detected in the 3–4-year-old. He or she discriminates kinsfolk from non-kinsfolk, equating the former mainly with people living in close proximity. He knows his own father and mother precisely, but already calls his mother's co-wives 'mother'. Similarly, he knows that 'father' is his own father, but that other men—in the first instance those of the same joint family—are also 'fathers', and he knows that the other kinsfolk frequently seen are brothers, sisters, grandfather, grandmother. But he is still incapable of discriminating genealogical differences; he groups people by generation and by spatial proximity. Thus an adult brother may be described as a

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FEIT Tallensi FE11

867 'father'. A child learns the fundamental kinship terms and has the
601 idea of distinguishing its relatives according to generation and
602 genealogical distance long before it can couple this knowledge accurately with differential behaviour towards kinsmen. The 6-year-old knows the correct terms and appropriate behaviour defining its relations with the members of its own paternal family and has grasped the principle of classification according to descent. But in practice he still confuses spatial proximity and relative age with kinship, beyond the limits of his own family. The 10–12 year old has mastered the schema, except for some collateral and affinal kinsmen, the terms for whom are known though he cannot describe the relationships.

183 Biological drives and cultural motives combine to produce variations
856 in the rates of evolution of different schemas. I have not the experimental data to give accurate or even sample norms, but a rough indication is possible. If the 6-year-old is compared with the 12-year-old in respect to e.g. knowledge of the kinship structure, of agricultural processes, of ritual, and of sex life, the 6-year-old is least advanced in knowledge of the kinship structure and ritual, and most advanced in his or her knowledge of sex life, while knowledge of agricultural processes could fall somewhere between these two levels.

V. Fundamental Learning Processes

153 In the course of the preceding discussion I have given several indications of how Tale children are taught and learn. But our investigation would be incomplete without a special consideration of the three fundamental processes utilized by the child in its learning —mimesis, identification, and co-operation. These are not the only learning techniques observable among the Tallensi, but they are the most important; and they usually appear not in isolation but in association with one another. They are most intimately interwoven in play, the paramount educational exercise of Tale children.

153 *Mimesis.* Writers on primitive education have often attributed an
828 almost mystical significance to 'imitation' as the principal method by which a child learns. The Tallensi themselves declare that children learn by 'looking and doing'; but neither 'imitation' nor the formula used by the Tallensi help us to understand the actually observable process. Tale children do not automatically copy the